



Testimony
Laura Francis, COST President
First Selectman, Town of Durham
Before the Environment Committee
February 25, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) in support of bills to establish stewardship programs for various products, including:

- **SB-115 - AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSUMER PACKAGING** - To establish a stewardship program for the collection and recycling of consumer packaging.
- **HB-5139 - AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR TIRES** -To establish a stewardship program for discarded tires in the state.
- **HB-5142 - AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CERTAIN GAS CYLINDERS**

As Co-Chair of the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM), I have worked with the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) and other stakeholders to develop comprehensive recommendations to address solid waste management concerns. Recognizing that we are facing a solid waste management crisis, ninety municipalities have signed onto the coalition.

Municipalities are facing significant increases in recycling costs resulting from China's decision to no longer accept any more recyclable materials from the United States. At the same time, municipalities are facing other solid waste management issues due to the age and capacity of the state's trash to energy facilities and the anticipated closure of the Materials Innovations & Recycling Authority (MIRA). If these issues are not addressed, municipalities will have to ship solid waste to out-of-state landfills, which is an expensive option which may not be available in the future.

To help address these concerns, COST supports efforts to establish additional stewardship programs for products such as tires, gas cylinders and consumer packaging. Product stewardship programs have proven to be successful in reducing municipal costs and ensuring the proper disposal of products such as mattresses, paint, and mercury thermometers to better protect the environment and public health.

Although we are sensitive to concerns that stewardship programs for packaging may increase costs for consumers, without comprehensive solutions that include new and expanded



stewardship programs, consumers will face increased costs in property taxes, tipping fees, and other costs.

COST remains committed to working collaboratively with DEEP, lawmakers, and other stakeholders to support innovative, cost-effective solutions to promote greater recycling and reuse in an effort to reduce municipal costs and protect the environment and the state's natural resources. However, these solutions must include efforts to address the state's aging Waste to Energy facilities.

COST is pleased that the Environment Committee has raised a bill to consider issues relating to MIRA and we look forward to discussing steps that Connecticut can take now to ensure the continued viability of MIRA and the state's other Waste to Energy facilities until long-term solid waste management solutions become available.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important issues.